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PROGRAM Good Morning, America

STATION WJLA TV
ABC Network

DATE September 8, 1977 7:00 AM

CITY Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT An interview with Villiam Altmans

SANDY HILL: Earlier this morning, we talked with Villiam (?) Altmans. He is a Dutch journalist. And we talked to him about the assassination of President Kennedy. And Mr. Altmans has told us that earlier this week, he turned over to the U. S. government the name of the source who he claims can tell the full, the true story of a conspiracy in the assassination. Well, this morning, Mr. Altmans is going to tell us the name that he told the government.

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HILL: Villiam Altmans is a Dutch journalist who has spent more than ten years looking into the assassination of President Kennedy. He has been on this program twice before, first to tell us about his source George deMorenschild (?), who either committed suicide or was killed just before testifying on the assassination. Mr. Altmans says he now has a new potential witness, and he feels this witness can expose the existence and the details of the conspiracy to kill President Kennedy.

A letter to Mr. Altmans -- it was dated July 8th of this year and signed by the deputy chief counsel of the House Committee of Assassinations, Robert Tenenbaum -- says, in part, "If you are interested in seeking the truth, and I believe you are, then it seems to me that you have no option but to supply the committee with the identity of your new witness."

Well, this week Mr. Altmans did give the name to the committee and to the Justice Department. This morning he is here with me and with ABC correspondent Bob Clark, who covered the Warren Commission investigation.

Mr. Altman, what name did you turn over to the committee?
Who is your source?

VILLIAM ALTMAN: My new source is General Donald A. Donaldson whose name I handed to the Justice Department, as well as to the Select Committee on Assassinations two days ago. He is originally a Bulgarian, called Deko Demetroff (?), who came to this country at the end of the Second World War and was named by President Roosevelt, by presidential decree, a general of the United States of America. He was given an American name and he was made a citizen of the United States of America at that time.

Shortly afterwards, President Roosevelt used General Demetroff for secret missions into the Balkan area. And President Truman also made use of General Demetroff's service.

HILL: What does he know?

ALTMAN: General Demetroff claims, among other things in a letter that he sent in September of '75 to the committee of Senator Frank Church, that he knows the name of the man who ordered the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

HILL: How does he know this?

ALTMAN: That is what I think the authorities in Washington should find out. For that purpose, I have given, as full as possible, all information to both the Justice Department, the representative of Mr. Griffin Bell, Robert Keech, and to the Select Committee on Assassinations of Congress. I have given all the information I could gather over the past years. And I think the proper way now is to leave it to the authorities to determine further details. It's not my job.

BOB CLARK: And you have talked at length with General Donaldson....

ALTMAN: Oh, yes.

CLARK: Has he revealed the name of the man he regards as the assassin, the man who directed the assassination, to you?

ALTMAN: I understand your question, Bob. I would like not to answer that, because I don't want to endanger myself any further than I am already. As a matter of fact, I called the press conference -- a press conference a week ago, and I am going through this procedure in order to pull myself out of this matter and leave it to the American authorities.

I did the same thing with the former witness, George DeMorenschild. I pulled out at a certain moment when I was satisfied with the information. I handed it to the Select Committee and

I withdrew. Now he was killed. I do my best to see that this man doesn't get killed or kills himself before he can corroborate my statement.

CLARK: Are you concerned that by revealing his name today you may be endangering his life?

ALTMANS: I could imagine that that is the case. But here you have to make a choice. Where is the obligation of a journalist? Where is the obligation of a journalist, if he is satisfied that this information is serious enough to be revealed to the proper authorities in the middle of an investigation of who killed John F. Kennedy? I have to make a choice. I put the choice up to the General last Saturday, even this past Saturday in the Heathrow Airport, London, Holiday Inn. I put the choice still before this General Donaldson and said please come forth on Dutch television and tell the story yourself; I don't want to tell it; you have to tell it. And he refused. He threatened to shoot me if I went any further in my revelations. I passed on all this information on tape to the Justice Department.

CLARK: One thing that I find confusing. The General talks in his letter to the Church Committee about knowing who gave the direction to assassinate President Kennedy.

ALTMANS: Who gave the order, he says.

CLARK: Gave the order. Is he talking about the period of 1962 when he met with Kennedy?

ALTMANS: Exactly. Exactly.

CLARK: So he is not saying that he knows the man who gave the order in 1963 to commit the assassination.

ALTMANS: That, according to the General, is the same -- the same person. It's the same group. There is no difference between '62 and '63. As a matter of fact, he maintains that President Kennedy was first warned of an assassination plot against him by Soviet intelligence, and he claims that he was called in by John F. Kennedy to the White House because they knew each other, like he also had known President Truman and President Roosevelt, ex-President Roosevelt. He was called in by John F. Kennedy to the White House and he was told by President Kennedy that he knew that an assassination plot was discovered against the life of President Kennedy. And President Kennedy asked General Demetroff to assist in the investigation to unravel this, to take counter-measures against this plot. And of course they failed.

HILL: Mr. Altman, we would obviously like to continue this discussion with you further....

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HILL: But right now we're going to stop for a couple of commercial messages.

JOHN LINDSAY: Well, there'll be more of Sandy and Bob Clark's talk with Mr. Altmans in our next half-hour. Before we went on the air, ABC News contacted Senator Frank Church. And he said that he did not recall receiving General Donaldson's letter and he does not, in fact, even know General Donaldson.

And we'll be back right after these messages and some news.

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HILL: In our last half hour, we were talking with William Altmans -- he is a Dutch journalist -- about the Kennedy assassination. And he says that he now has a new witness who potentially can answer a lot of questions about the Kennedy assassination, give specific details about it.

You say, Mr. Altmans, that this man is a General Donaldson, that he sent a letter to Senator Frank Church in September of 1975. Now what happened with that letter? And what all did it entail?

ALTMANS: Well, as you know, he offered to testify for the Church Committee on his knowledge of who ordered the assassination of John F. Kennedy. And of course, it is quite surprising that according to General Donaldson, he was received by President Ford in the White House in February, 1976 and discussed at length the assassination with former President Ford. And this is important. He is so emphatic about it that I think it is important enough information to be investigated by the Select Committee on Assassinations.

HILL: But what happened at that time when he sent the letter?

ALTMANS: He said -- he says that President Ford, Senator Church and he came to an agreement not to bring up this information that he had at that time. I guess that he -- and he put so many conditions to the release of this information that President Ford and Mr. Church found it unacceptable.

HILL: Mr. Altmans, this morning, Bob and I had an opportunity to see this letter as well.

ALTMANS: The letter was on the screen, yes.

HILL: But we read through it. It seemed rambling....

ALTMANS: It's absolutely true. Absolutely. I find the same thing.

HILL: Don't you believe that that was substantive reason

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then perhaps for them to question and to put it back on the back burner, to doubt his credibility and who he was and what he believed?

ALTMANS: I completely agree with you. But when it is true that the letter was -- the letter was written in September; the meeting with Ford was in February. That is maybe the period they used to check this man's credibility and identity, etcetera, etcetera. But when it is true that he did meet with former President Ford and the fact that I'm revealing that now upset him last Saturday so tremendously in the Holiday Inn in London Heathrow Airport that he went as far as to say if I would violate the breach of confidence between him personally and President Ford, he would shoot me [sic]. So I have passed on this information to the Justice Department two days ago and said the man is threatening me now because I'm revealing the information he had.

CLARK: One point I think we need to make strongly -- the General is talking about things that he and President Kennedy discussed in 1962....

ALTMANS: Presumably.....

CLARK: After the assassination, Bobby Kennedy continued as Attorney General for a year. Presumably he would have had all of this information. He would have had the name too. If this is true, why, in your view, did Bobby Kennedy never pursue it?

ALTMANS: Well, that is the great question mark: why the Kennedy family doesn't say a word. According to General Donaldson, the Kennedy family is in the possession of the top secret report on the Kennedy assassination. According to General Donaldson, both Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Theodore Sorensen are in the possession of this document.

CLARK: But I believe that document goes back to 1963 or '64. Presumably....

ALTMANS: Exactly.

CLARK: ...Bobby Kennedy was aware of that document too.

ALTMANS: Maybe. And that's why I think if a man with this posture, with his career, with this having been sent on secret missions by President Roosevelt and by President Truman, etcetera, is received by Kennedy, had this information, I think at this day and age, in this moment of history, this Select Committee on Assassinations should investigate this information, should call this man to testify in Washington also, although I'm extremely scared that when I told the committee to investigate deMoreschild, he was dead the same day that they invited him. And I'm now ex-

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tremely worried once more that anything might happen to General Donaldson.

HILL: Mr. Altman, you had told us specifically about some forces that the General talked to you about....

ALTMAN: Yes.

HILL: And that is, forces who not only killed Kennedy, but who intimidated Presidents Ford and Carter, apparently Vice President Rockefeller as well; that they, in fact, were involved in what you feel is the killing of George deMorenschild, and also the son of Aristotle Onassis.

Now who are these forces?

ALTMAN: Madame -- Sandra, I am just as alarmed and incredulous about all this as you. All I'm doing is reporting the information I got to the Justice Department and to the Select Committee. And I hope the authorities in the United States are qualified to estimate [sic] this information, will take over. That's all I'm doing.

HILL: Is there any reason for you to believe that the CIA is in any way related with these forces?

ALTMAN: That is what General Donaldson implied and said straight. Very, very much so. It is a group within the CIA. It's in the letter to Senator Church, too; that he writes this group within the CIA should be -- should be exposed. He believes so.

And so, therefore, let the authorities take over this man before he gets killed or kills himself in an obscure way.

HILL: Mr. Altman, thank you very much.

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Anthony A. Lapham
General Counsel

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DATE

10/7/77

STAT

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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Legislative Counsel ✓

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~~Inspector General~~

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1. FYI in connection with Select Committee on Assassinations Investigation.

3. Any thoughts on whether any action or further investigation needs to be undertaken with respect to this information.

STAT

Tony Lapham